

Troopers Apprehend Habitual Car Thief



Charles R. Mason IV

New Castle – Delaware State Police have arrested an Elsmere man responsible for the theft of multiple vehicles, occurring over the span of five weeks, one of which was a carjacking, with children in the vehicle.

On Sunday, January 7, 2018, at approximately 11:08 p.m., Troopers responded to the Wawa, located at 4000 N. DuPont Highway, New Castle, for a vehicle theft that had just occurred. Upon arrival at the scene Troopers were advised by a

Wawa employee, that he had started his 2013 Hyundai Elantra, to warm it up, and then went back inside the store to finish his shift, leaving the vehicle unlocked and running. Upon returning to the lot a few minutes later, he discovered the vehicle was gone.

While searching the area, Troopers were alerted by an area resident, to a suspicious person, who was on foot in the area of Memorial Drive and Karlin Drive. Troopers located the subject, who was later identified as Charles R. Mason IV, 44, of Elsmere, and took him in to custody without incident. With information provided by another witness the Hyundai was also recovered in the Comcast parking lot, located at 4008 N. DuPont Highway.

Through various investigative leads and measures, Troopers were able to link Mason to multiple vehicle thefts, to include a carjacking, as well as other related crimes, that took place at the below listed locations on the specified dates. Mason was also linked to vehicle thefts that occurred in both New Castle County Police and City of Wilmington Police jurisdictions, also listed below.

12/2/2017: Wawa, 2030 Limestone Road, Wilmington

12/07/2017: Meineke, 1512 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington

12/11/2017: Steve's Centerville Inn, 1204 Centerville Road, Wilmington

12/15/2017: Comegys Pub, 210 N. Union Street, Wilmington (Wilmington Police)

12/26/2017: Royal Farms, 3701 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington

12/26/2017: Joel's Rest Stop, 3 Rock Avenue, Wilmington (New Castle County Police)

01/04/2018: Wawa, 2030 Limestone Road, Wilmington

01/04/2018: The Car Shop, 2205 Mitch road, Wilmington

01/08/2018: Wawa, 4000 N. DuPont Highway, New Castle

Mason was charged with 7 counts of Theft of a Motor Vehicle, 2 counts of Carjacking 1st degree, 2 counts of Endangering the Welfare of a Child, and 1 count each of Attempted Theft of a Motor Vehicle, Theft Under \$1500.00, Criminal Trespass 2nd degree, and Criminal Mischief Under \$1000.00.

Mason was arraigned and committed to the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution in lieu of \$127,500.00 secured bond.

Anyone with further information regarding these incidents is asked to contact Cpl. R. Kunicki at Troop 6 by calling 302-633-5000. Information may also be provided by calling Delaware crime stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333 or via the internet at <http://www.delaware.crimestoppersweb.com>

As we proceed through the cold winter months the Delaware State Police would like to remind drivers NOT to leave their cars running with keys in the ignition and unattended. Not only is it illegal, but this practice has contributed to a recent increase in auto thefts. There are a few simple steps you can take to reduce the risk of losing your car to an opportunistic thief:

- ***STAY WITH THE CAR.*** It's better to be cold for a few minutes in your car while it warms up than to be left in the cold while the thief drives it away.
- ***LOCK THE DOORS.*** At all times when unoccupied.
- ***GET A REMOTE STARTER.*** Remote starters are the safest way to keep your car running while unattended. With the keys out of the ignition, a thief can't even put the car in gear.
- ***And finally, NEVER leave children unattended in a vehicle, running or not.***

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Michael Austin

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